

Lower Potomac Tributary Team

February 2005.

About the Watershed:

The Lower Potomac Watershed is comprised of Charles and St. Mary's Counties, and a small portion of Prince George's County that makes up the headwaters of Mattawoman Creek and Zekiah Swamp. Other major waterways within the watershed include the St. Mary's, Port Tobacco, and Wicomico Rivers; Breton Bay; St. Clement Bay; and Nanjemoy Creek. The area is characterized by forest and agriculture; however, it is experiencing growth faster than any of the other major watersheds in the state. Managing agricultural run-off and reducing the impacts from the increasing amount of developed lands are high priorities for the Lower Potomac Tributary Team.

About the Team:

The mission of the Lower Potomac Tributary Team is to reduce nitrogen and sediment inputs and to restore habitat in the Lower Potomac Watershed through community participation. The team has a strong citizen base and a solid representation from the local



government and the business community. The team's interest in policy issues couples with their continuing focus on outreach and educational programs.

Future efforts of the Lower Potomac Team include forging a partnership with neighboring Virginia on Lower Potomac issues of mutual interest. The team is also involved in fostering the growth of local watershed organizations and now partners with the recently formed Port Tobacco Restoration Association.

Recent Accomplishments:

- In 2005, the team sponsored a public education forum on Groundwater, Well and Septic Systems for the residents of the watershed. This same presentation can also be seen on the local county cable networks.
- Other educational forums include a Living Shorelines Forum addressing the loss of natural shoreline habitat to hardened shorelines protection practices, and a Stormwater Management Workshop which focused on encouraging homeowners to use raingardens, rainbarrells, and bioretention cells in their landscaping practices.
- The team planted over 1 million oyster spat after the 2002, and 2003 wade-ins.



Mirant Mid-Atlantic representatives join elected officials and Tributary Team members at the wade-in hosted by Mirant's Morgantown Power Plant.

- The team holds its annual wade-in at Mirant's Morgantown Power Plant. 2004 saw the group wade out to 31 inches before losing sight of its feet, its best result yet.
- During 2004, the Lower Potomac team, in partnership with (METCOM) planted its second consecutive tree grow out at its St. Mary's Shores Spray Irrigation site near Breton Bay.
- In December 04 Team members planted nearly 30 trees on the campus of the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in appreciation for the use of their facility to hold the Team monthly meetings there. The tree planting is the first of several planned.
- During 2003, the Lower Potomac team partnered with the St. Mary's River Project and secured a grant from BoatUS to design, produce, and install signs to promote environmentally friendly boating practices in sensitive areas. The signs can be found at marinas and public ramps throughout Charles and St Mary's counties.
- The team gets its annual dose of salt-water spray while spending an evening with the Chesapeake Bay Field Lab's Captain Jackie Russell aboard his skipjack, THE DEE OF ST. MARY'S. Sailing out of St. George Island, Captain Russell couples his knowledge of the bay with his extensive repertoire of waterman's lore to give the team an up-close look at water quality, habitat and the living resources that the team and Capt. Russell's CBFL work so diligently to preserve and restore.
- The team is working with St. Mary's County to retrofit stormwater practices at its government buildings. This effort includes the construction of a bioretention facility and buffer planting in the Breton Bay Watershed.



Oyster restoration is a top priority for the Lower Potomac Team. Team members plant more than 1 million spat following their 2002 wade-in.

Team Members

Bob Boxwell, Chair, Cove Point Natural Heritage Trust
 David Waring, Vice-Chair, Permits Plus Consulting
 Beth Horsey, State Contact, MD Dept. of Agriculture
 Bill Barger, Cobb Island
 Wayne Cooper, Charles County Commissioner
 Alan Cruikshank, Citizen
 Gene Davies, County Services, Inc.
 Luis Dieguez, Charles Soil Conservation District
 Jon G. Dunn, U.S. Steel
 John Houser, Forestry Consulting
 Michele Parlett, Citizen
 Robert Paul, St. Mary's College
 William Shreve, St. Mary's Metropolitan Commission
 Christopher Tanner, St. Mary's College
 Sue Veith, St. Mary's Planning & Zoning
 Karen Wigger, Charles Planning & Zoning
 George Wilmot, State Water Quality Advisory Commission
 Bruce Young, St. Mary's Soil Conservation District

Team Participants

Bonnie Bick, Sierra Club
 Henry Bush, St. Mary's River Project
 Connie Dunbar, Port Tobacco Watershed Association
 Mary Posapco Lilly, U.S. Steel
 Liz Spitzer, Mirant Mid-Atlantic

Team Coordinator

Mike Bilek, MD Dept. of Natural Resources

For More Information:

For more information, contact Mike Bilek, team coordinator, at 410-260-8988. You can also visit the Tributary Strategies Program website at www.dnr.state.md.us/bay/tribstrat/.